



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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1947 FUR-SEAL TAKE ANNOUNCED

A total of 61,447 fur-seal skins were taken in the Government-administered sealing operations on Alaska's Pribilof Islands during the 1947 season which closed July 31, Secretary of the Interior J. A. Krug announced today.

This represents a decrease of 3276 skins from the 1946 take, due, according to officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior, in part to the earlier termination of sealing operations. The take of seals is confined to the young males which early in the season are segregated from the rest of the herd. As soon as these young males begin to mingle with the family groups, it is customary to discontinue sealing to avoid injury to the females and young.

The seal herd numbered 3,613,653 animals when the annual census was taken early in August, Secretary Krug stated. This is an increase of 6.72 per cent over the 1946 census of 3,386,008 animals.

Fur-seals, which have a soft and beautiful underpelage, are highly valued and the Pribilof Island herd is estimated to be worth in excess of \$100,000,000.

When the Federal Government assumed active management of the fur-seals in the Pribilofs in 1910, the herd contained only 132,279 animals. By careful conservation the herd has been developed to its present size and, at the same time, has produced nearly a million and a half skins which have been sold for the account of the Government.

The North American fur seal herd comprises about 80 percent of all the fur seals in the world. Smaller herds are found in the western Pacific off the coast of Uruguay, and off the Cape of Good Hope.

The main breeding grounds of the North American fur seals are St. Paul and St. George Islands, the largest of the Pribilof group. From wintering grounds extending as far south as southern California, the entire herd assembles each spring on these treeless, volcanic islands. Here they remain for several months, during which the young seals, or pups, are born.

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